

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

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Founded in 1912, the Book Club of California is a non-profit organization of book lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to 1,250 members, excluding Student members with proof of student status. When vacancies exist, membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues. Dues date from the month of the member's election. Regular membership is \$75; Sustaining \$100; Patron \$150; and Student \$25. All members receive the Quarterly News-Letter and, excepting Student members, the current Keepsake.

All members have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying Club publications, which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member. All members may purchase extra copies of Keepsakes or News-Letters, when available. Membership dues in the amount of \$10 for regular membership, \$35 from the sustaining level, and \$85 as a patron and donations, including books, are deductible in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code.

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UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA RARE BOOK SCHOOL

BY COLYN WOHLMUT



As you read this, there is a growing movement to foster interest and compelling scholarship in the history of books and printing. This movement is international in nature. In some ways, it is a response to the rise of book conservation as a profession. In other aspects, it stems from the academe's interest in material culture as a lens through which historical realities can be illuminated. Additionally, library studies programs and doctoral programs are beginning to allow their students to focus on this history and structure of bookbindings. Above all, the field of rare books is intellectually stimulating and emotionally satisfying.

Terry Belanger established, under the Book Arts Press, a rare book school associated with the Columbia University School of Library Service in 1972. In 1992, the school was attached to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and became known as the Virginia Rare Book School (VARBS). Each year, 30 classes are offered under the general headings of Binding; Collections and Collection Management; General; Descriptive and Textual Bibliography; History; Illustration and Printing Processes; Libraries, Archives, and Electronic Resources; Manuscripts; and Typography and Book Design.

Leading scholars from around the world come to present five-day courses on their field of expertise. VARBS has a clear mandate to accept students of varying backgrounds to keep the classes well integrated. Librarians, students, dealers, collectors, and anyone with a genuine interest in the materials are welcome. Scholarships and fellowships are also available to encourage first-time students. The Book Club of California has, in the past, contributed to the school's scholarship fund.

Depending on the course schedule, classes are held in Charlottesville, Baltimore, New York, or Washington, D.C. Institutions who host the

courses have included the Grolier Club, Freer and Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian Institution, Johns Hopkins University, and the Walters Art Museum. Access to these collections is a pleasure not to be missed. Participation in VARBS through its different host institutions provides exposure to select treasures within unique collections on the East Coast.

My first experience at VARBS took place at the headquarters in Charlottesville. By choosing to stay in the campus dormitories, I immediately met some fellow participants with whom I could pal around during the week's activities. Terry runs a tight, and well catered, ship. Classes are kept perfectly on time and punctuated with receptions morning, afternoon, and night. Participants do not lack for good food, drink, or companionship; so spirit, mind, and body are all cared for.

In the summer 2008 section, the five course offerings included *Introduction to the History of Bookbindings*; *Bibliographer's Toolkit: Printed Books since 1800*; *Designing Archival Description Systems*; *Introduction to Paleography 800-1500*; and *Identification of Photographic Print Processes*. Course participants numbered from 8 to 12 per class.

My personal interest is in bookbinding structure and conservation, and I was thrilled to be admitted into the bookbindings section. The course is taught by Jan Storm van Leeuwen, former Keeper of the Bookbindings at the Royal Dutch Library, whose four volume text, *Dutch Decorated Bookbinding in the Eighteenth Century*, was published in 2006. The weeklong courses are beyond intensive. Five days to cover 1000 years of history throughout an entire continent requires a very challenging pace.

We spent the first day on terminology. The task of identifying the elements of books or bookbindings is complicated by the international nature of the study. Few countries have successfully translated terms for nationally specific features, not to mention the fact that bookbinders, book collectors, book dealers, and librarians use the same terms to mean different things. International efforts are underway for codification of terms and their equivalent translations for use in major European languages, but we must wait some time to see the publication of a unified vocabulary.

Students had the opportunity to see (but not handle) books from the Special Collections at the University of Virginia and items from VARBS

collections. It is the policy of the school not to let students touch the items, as, "no old book was ever improved by being handled by ten or twelve persons, one right after another." This posed special challenges to the exercises of placing selected books in chronological order, but the task was a valuable exercise in testing our knowledge. Additionally, we learned techniques for identifying leathers and other materials of bookbinding, augmented with elements of structure specific to region and era.

We were shown historical models, which van Leeuwen had commissioned at great expense. Not only were these models made with the features of medieval bindings, but he had insisted that the binder use the same methods. Hand bookbinding techniques have remained fairly static for the last 1500 years, but modifications have occurred according to technology and cultural tastes. The binder had to fabricate custom fastenings in addition to using specific decorative practices.

The second course I followed was offered at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. The contrast between the two programs is interesting to note, again, to encourage others to experience VARBS in different locations. The current Curator for Rare Books and Manuscripts, William Noel, has an open and aggressive policy of education and materials use. Here, students are allowed to touch things.

Only two classes were held during this session, *Introduction to Western Codicology* and *Book Illustration Processes to 1900*. Albert Derolez, Emeritus Professor at the Free Universities of Brussels, was my instructor in codicology. He has written widely on palæography, and we did several exercises on transcription of medieval manuscripts (bone up on your Latin).

After the first few days of instruction on the features of manuscripts such as types of materials, ruling patterns and techniques, and illumination processes, we spent most of our time analyzing manuscripts. Throughout the week, we were each able to carefully study forty distinct works of medieval craftsmanship. This was truly a unique opportunity under the helpful guidance of Professor Derolez, and one which would require careful introductions at most institutions. The benefit to each class member, all of whom had different backgrounds and experience, was evident through our discussions and writings.

Additional features of the course in Baltimore were private tours of both the Walters Art Museum Rare Books and Manuscripts collection

and the Peabody Library. Our class was treated to a session in Peabody's Special Collections where we were able to analyze an additional set of manuscripts from their collections. Within the tour of the Walters, we viewed highlights from the museum's collections and a demonstration of their Islamic manuscript digitization project.

The intention of this grant funded project is to make the files freely available on the web. No copyright or use restrictions will be present. Again this is an effort by Dr. Noel to foster education and use of manuscripts. The system is of great interest to other institutions as the mechanism is completely adaptable to manuscripts of any size. Its protective features provide a standard for new uses at a time when libraries and collections of all types are grappling with the challenges of creating digitization protocols.

Institutions everywhere have admired and emulated the pioneering work done by Terry Belanger, who is now finishing his final term as Director of the Virginia Rare Book School. The following list provides information on similar programs around the world. It has been digested from VARBS web site, <http://www.rarebookschool.org>.

California Rare Book School: <http://www.archimedespalimpsest.org/> Weeklong courses on a broad range of topics, including book history in the West and early America.

Book History at Texas A&M: <http://cushing.tamu.edu/bookhistory/> An annual five day workshop in the history of books and printing featuring evening lectures. Graduate credit available.

Midwest Book and Manuscript Studies: <http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/programs/mbms/> Certificate, one and two week summer intensives, and one and two day workshops in special collections, rare books, and preservation topics.

Colorado Antiquarian Book Seminars: <http://www.bookseminars.com> Week long gathering featuring half day seminars on out-of-print, antiquarian, and rare or used book topics.

L'Institut Histoire du Livre: <http://ihl.enssib.fr/siteihl.php?page=4&aflng=en> Book history workshops in Lyon, France. Courses taught in English and French.

London Rare Book School: <http://ies.sas.ac.uk/cmpps/events/courses/LRBS/index.htm> Weeklong courses limited to twelve students on topics which stress the materiality of the book.

THE AMERICAN BOOKBINDERS MUSEUM

BY J.O. BUGENTAL

Many bibliophiles collect books, some even own a press, but how many collect all the machines that produce the books? Tim James, proprietor of Taurus Bindery in San Francisco, does. His small showroom at the corner of Sixteenth and Harrison Streets contains the only museum of its type in the world, the American Bookbinders Museum. Inside is an impressive array of examples of the heavy iron machinery of commercial bookbinding and its evolution from handicraft to industrial capability.

Just one year old and still in the process of securing non-profit status, one man's collection is on the way to becoming a unique institution. Among the little museum's exhibits on the process and social impact of industrial bookbinding, visitors will find a 1910 Smyth Binder; a Morrison saddle stitcher, ca. 1899, with spools of stitching wire; and a Sanborn spine roller, ca. 1850, which produces springback spines that allow books to open to center and lie flat. The oldest piece on view is an Imperial arming press, ca. 1830, for impressing gold on book covers—a two-step process, first blind stamping, then gold applied with heat to the first impression.

"At this point, it's really just the idea of a museum," says Tim. He's also got two pen-ruling machines, two of the fifty once in San Francisco, which was long a center for the custom binding of accounting books and ledgers. Each set is custom-defined regarding its rules, covers, page number, index tabs, and marbled edges to ensure that all pages are present and in a matched sequence. Unfortunately, Tim's pen-rulers are too big to fit in the present showroom.

The project has enjoyed support from diverse sources, including Sam Ellencourt at the Harcourt Bindery in Boston, Klaus Rotzscher of Pettingale's in Berkeley, and the late Stella Patri, 1896-2001, founding member of the Hand Bookbinders of California and recipient of the Book Club's Oscar Lewis Award in 1995.

The collection also includes an exhaustive library of 500 bookbinding manuals, 100 periodical titles, and 1,000 equipment manuals, plus records from businesses and trade unions, patterned papers, and binder's tickets. Library visitors will find the nineteenth century *Buchbinder*, a

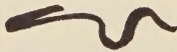
German manual that describes the state of the craft and its practice in detailed illustration, and a complete run of the periodical *The American Bookbinder*, 1890-1894.

Bookbinding predates printing in North America, starting from Boston's John Sanders in 1636. Early book collectors bought loose pages and could choose to have them bound or not. For 400 years, from the invention of printing in the fifteenth century until the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth, binderies were places of hand work, much of it sewing, typically performed by women. Binding was country-specific; the Dutch, French, English, and American binders each had their own styles.

The museum tells the story of binding's evolution. One breakthrough was the change from leather to cloth; another was ribbon embossing of the traditional gold inlay. Also operating here is one of the first binding machines, the "Singer of book sewing," by Joseph Smyth from Connecticut in 1880.

Visitors to this idea of a museum have included archivists, printers, and members of book clubs. One old, retired bookbinder came in and became teary-eyed at seeing someone so interested in what he did. Binders don't sign their work in the way that printers do.

Tim would like to build a working museum with regular open hours and visiting school kids every day. He wants to get all the machines operating so visitors can follow the process from start to finish. He's hoping the project can become self-sustaining by at least 2036, the 400th anniversary of American bookbinding. For now, visits are by appointment. Call Tim James at the Taurus Bindery, 415-671-2233 or email him at bookbinder47@hotmail.com.



EARLY CHILDREN'S BOOKS AT THE SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

BY RUTH MCGURK

San Francisco holds a unique archive for the study of early children's books which will interest scholars of printing, artists, writers, or anyone curious about the book arts. The George M. Fox Collection of Early Children's Books is housed at the Marjorie G. and Carl W. Stern Book Arts and Special Collections Center at the San Francisco Public Library. Donated in 1978, it consists of over 2000 volumes of mostly nineteenth-century picture books.

It was donated by the father of George King Fox, a past president of the Book Club of California. Fox the elder worked for the Milton Bradley toy company, which had purchased the children's book publishing company McLoughlin Brothers. Fox acquired its archives and then expanded his collection to include early color children's books in general.

For those of a scholarly bent, the Fox collection is an untapped trove of multiple editions of the same titles, nearly complete runs of long-running series and, of course, the file copies of the McLoughlin Brothers. Some of the latter are titles acquired from English publishers, marked up with the editorial and illustrative changes thought necessary for the American market.

Through studying the collection it is possible to watch publishing tactics take shape, printing conventions be established, color printing emerge from its infancy, and the emphasis in children's literature shift from moral instruction to amusement. The McLoughlin Brothers firm itself spans the change from the didactic to the diversionary. "Educate and Amuse" is part of its emblem. The commercial considerations of a publishing house tilt its view of children from moral blank slates to potential customers. After all, gaudy illustrations sell more books than dogma.

For those who find children's books entertaining on their own account, delving into the collection is its own reward. Housed as it is in envelopes within folders within boxes, there is a deal of unwrapping to be done to get at the books. The collection is not listed online and the card catalog is rife with the bibliographical lacunae of the period: few dates, few authors, fewer illustrators.

The books are grouped by publisher and are shelved chronologically only to the extent that particular publishers survived for finite periods of time. Sometimes there are multiple books in a folder, so it may take a little effort to find them. [The online version of McGurk's full text identifies all books by series, box and folder numbers. Ed.]

Publishers put out dozens of titles in series with names that suggest an extended family: Aunt Busy Bee's, Uncle Heart's-Ease, and Mamma and Papa Lovechild's. Presumably, the big sellers in their lists would pull along the also-rans. They are also shameless in putting out sequels. The Cock Robin story is spun into *The Sad Fate of Cock Robin*, *Sick Robin and His Kind*, *Nurse Jenny Wren*, *Death and Burial of Cock Robin*, *Cock Robin Alive and Well Again* and *Mrs. Dove's Party*.

The back covers of their books are used as canvases for self-promotion. *Little Dame Crump and Her Pig* has these fulsome remarks: "These have been especially printed for us abroad in the best and most artistic manner. Every book being printed in eight to ten different colors. No book in all the series contains anything approaching vulgarity, the Publisher's aim being to furnish amusement coupled with refinement, for our dear little ones."

The publishers use series numbers to encourage buying complete sets of unrelated stories, or they string out minimal material. *Birds on the Wing* appears in eight books with only three birds to a book.

Stock cuts which were afterthoughts to the heavy-handed texts at the beginning of the nineteenth century give way to a riot of color and whimsy at mid-century. Illustrators leave grim vignettes behind and let their pleasure in domestic detail show. Color printing takes off and veers toward excess.

The more elaborate the chromolithographed illustrations become, the more washed-out and wan the type. Drawn alphabets with wispy tendrils take over for solid typography.

There are many remarkable illustrations in the collection. Some favorites include: a ghost of a turkey visiting a man after he eats too much Thanksgiving dinner in *Classics of Babyland*, 1877; a hen four times the size of the children in *Learning to Count: Or, One, Two, Buckle My Shoe*, c.1870; a zebra looking into the black night only to see a ghost zebra with a pink penumbra in *The Horse and Other Stories*, 1871.

The animals take over in *Sketches at the Zoo: From a Comic Point of View*. The elephants carry banners reading "No more penny rides," the monkeys "More nuts," and the demoralized gorillas "No poking in the ribs with sticks." A stippled pink pelican and a dour lion hold court on a dais.

The collection includes some books with moveable parts. *Mother Goose Melodies with Magical Changes*, 1879, has surprises revealed behind folds: the three wise men of Gotham are attacked by gulls and night-marish fish. *Flowers from Story Land* has a picture of a boy being given a long accordion called a mile-end or pull-out: "As these showy little books were first made in London and as they stretch out a long way like the road to Mile-End they were named after that far off place."

The collection demonstrates the breadth of children's books' subject matter, teaching everything from the alphabet and games to morality and natural history. Also included are some historically significant treatments of colonialism, foreigners, and slavery and racism.

The back covers of many serial publications tout remedies available to treat current afflictions. Crosby's Vitalized Phosphates are recommended on the back of Philip and Robin: "Physicians alone have prescribed 157,780 bottles as pleasant to take and free from all danger. Those involved in brain work would be saved from the fatal resort to chloral and other destructive stimulants." An ad for patent medicine on the back of Jack Spratt and His Wife exclaims, "Do Not Untimely Die! Sore throats cured with 1 dose. Bowel Complaints 1 dose. Typhus 2. Diphtheria 3. Scarlet Fever 4. Dysentery 5."

It wasn't until the eighteenth century that children had a special class of literature beyond the ABCs provided for them. The sensibility of early children's books may be foreign to us, yet the pattern of attempting to make instruction entertaining continues to be familiar. Examining old children's books is a delight. There is nothing like handling these much loved volumes to evoke the past. The Fox collection is a treasure which deserves to be known by a wider public.

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

The previous article was reprinted with major revisions from The Ampersand, quarterly journal of the Pacific Center for the Book Arts. Summer 2000, as a final installment in Terry Horrigan's series of introductions to the San Francisco Public Library. Thank you to the staff of The Book Arts and Special Collections Center at the Library—Andrea Grimes, Asa Peavy, and Susie Taylor—for their assistance. The full article can be found on the SFPL website.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

BY JOHN HAWK, PRESIDENT

Excerpts from remarks delivered at the Annual Meeting, October 21, 2008.

This is a time of change and transition at the Book Club of California. The most obvious transition is in the board's decision to move forward with expansion and renovation of the Club's quarters. For the past year the Board of Directors and Club committees have been discussing, planning and preparing for this expansion.

The board had a series of special meetings to address strategic planning, confirming a shared sense among the board of the Club's future direction. Following these special meetings, we came up with a document that carefully considers space needs and other critical requirements, including public use, programming, exhibitions, staffing, housing the Club's Library and supporting use of the collection. The Facilities Committee recommended that the Club lease the space to be vacated by SPUR, and the Board voted unanimously in favor of this plan.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the Club members who took time to respond to my email messages requesting feedback on the Club's committee structure. The response was positive and the input from members was helpful. Recommendations based on the feedback included: merging the Public Programs, Exhibits and Oscar Lewis Award Committees into a Programs Committee; changing the name of the Nominating Committee to the Governance Committee and adding review of the Club's bylaws to the committee's charge; suspending the House Committee; and establishing a Marketing Committee and Grants Committee. These recommendations were approved by the board at its March meeting.

I am also grateful for the hard work of many at the Club who serve on its committees and through their work serve the Club and its membership. Several committees have adopted documents to define their responsibilities and give direction to their goals. What follows is only a cursory summary of some of the activities of the committees.

Under Kathleen Burch's leadership the **Membership Committee** continues to do an outstanding job seeking new members for the Club. It is important to realize, however, that we all need to work hard to recruit members.

The **Programs Committee** under Bruce Crawford does an outstanding job planning exhibitions and programs that draw attention to the Club among members and prospective members. The Club continues to be visited by non-members seeking to view exhibitions they learned of in the *Chronicle*.

The **Marketing Committee**, under Malcolm Whyte's direction, has produced a variety of products and activities to draw attention to the Club through media contacts in print, television and radio and has crafted press releases to promote the Club.

I referenced earlier the role of the **Strategic Planning Committee**, comprised of Bruce Crawford, Curtiss Taylor and Chris Loker, in our expansion and reorganization.

The **Personnel Committee** under Kathy Barr works with the staff and advises the board on matters related to "best practice." We had a board training session that produced a road map of practices and guidelines. Board training at least once a year will refine and improve governance practices at the Club.

The **Library Committee** under Mary Manning is busy addressing issues related to the Club's expansion and renovation. Security and safety of the Club's library will be front and center in all of the expansion considerations.

The **Grants Committee** under Michael Thompson continues to do an excellent job in administering the Club's grants program. This past year five institutions and three individuals received grants totaling \$31,250.

Victoria Dailey and the **Publications Committee** manage the Club's publishing program. They have instituted a more thorough accounting practice for book projects and will be better able to project and account for expenses and revenue.

The **Governance Committee** has been addressing a number of issues. There were changes this year in the manner in which nominees for board Directors were solicited among the membership, thus broadening our reach when seeking prospective Directors and promoting a more transparent process.

The **Finance Committee's** oversight of the Club's investment fund and budgeting process is under very good control by the team of Tom Woodhouse as Treasurer and Paul Robertson as Chair of the Finance Committee. They have made positive changes to the way in which the Club budgets for its publications and accounts for the income received from the sale of books.

Finally, I want to mention Susan Filter's work with the ad hoc Facilities Committee and thank her for all of her committee's work which has been essential since the committee was formed in March.

As always, if you have concerns or questions about any aspect of the Club, please see me and I will be happy to assist you or try to address your concern.

SERENDIPITY

On February 12, this nation honored the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln, a president tried by war, but not just any war. This horrible conflict occurred between brothers and friends to determine if the republican experiment inaugurated in the new world would survive and extend its revolutionary legal protections to all residents. President Lincoln saw victory, imperfect as it was.

Barack Obama, a man of that race freed by that conflict 150 years past, calls for an "era of responsibility." Like Lincoln, he plans that "we may do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations." Now, he finds a nation embroiled in a financial panic, and, as his predecessor Franklin Delano Roosevelt did, seeks to restore a public spirit of confidence.

President Obama tapped the public mood with a decree to limit executive compensation. We are in hopes that these strictures will not greatly impact President John Hawk's take home pay from the Book Club, but the reverberations from that precipitous drop in the stock

market have certainly shaken the fifth floor at 512 Sutter Street. On December 9, the Board of Directors approved cutting the Club budget fifteen percent.

Meantime, SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association) has announced the "Grand Opening" of its Urban Center at 654 Mission Street in May. Its departure opens the south end of Floor Five for BCC expansion. Mindful of money, the Board reduced the Club's proposed renovation costs by two-thirds. As this "temporary remodeling" may exist for five years, Club rooms will be comfortably "clubby." Space configuration, audio-visual ceiling wiring and equipment, and a permanent bar [immense cheering] will be in place.

"Words Take Wing" could have been the headline for two stories in the *Chronicle* two months apart. The first is pure public art. High above the sidewalk, in front of the North Beach celebrity mural where Grant and Columbus Avenues join, are flying white "Vs."

In reality, these suspended things represent 23 open books, upside down spilling their words, some in mirror image, on the sidewalk below. Artists Brian Goggin and Dorka Keehn unveiled "Language of the Birds" on November 22, 2008. There is whimsy about it, just as there is with Goggin's amusing "Defenestration"—odd bits of furniture fixed to the outside walls of an abandoned hotel at the southwest corner of Sixth and Howard Streets. We lightheartedly enjoy both.

In early January, the paper had a second story on words taking wing. Stacy's Bookstore, 581 Market, below Second, is shutting down after 85 years. John W. Stacy began selling technical books in 1923, but in the 1950s, his establishment moved to its current location and became a general book store. When we arrived in San Francisco thirty years ago, we enjoyed going to Bonanza Books on the north side of Market above Montgomery, Holmes' Books on Third, and Stacy's. Now all are gone.

Yet, an electronic shift makes San Francisco the fifth most literate city in the nation. While the number of bookstores has declined, online reading has increased. San Francisco follows Minneapolis, Seattle, Washington City, and the other Minnesota Twin, St. Paul.

Washington may drop a notch. On February 15, the Washington *Post* abolished *Book World*, its separate tabloid, and folded literary critique into other parts of the paper. The New York *Times Book*

Review, up to thirty pages, remains the largest stand alone newspaper section devoted to books.

Fewer than forty copies of the Club's *James Weld Towne* remain, Bruce Johnson's analysis of California's most famous Gold Rush printing firm, Towne & Bacon. In the 1860s, these San Francisco job printers laid the foundations for fine printing in the Golden State, triumphing even Edward Bosqui. Go downtown and take home the bacon! They are going fast!

The new federal Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act to protect children from lead went into effect on February 10. Many libraries feared, due to confusing wording, that they must test their children's books for lead content. This application to books makes the new legislation "a law of unintended consequences."

Of note is that the Club's next book out is the children's book *Let's Play*. Yet we are safe from the new legislation. We will see that any lead type involved will be copper-faced. This fine press book's reasonable price guarantees that it will not be in the hands of children younger than sixty. Any adults who have not crossed this threshold may have probationary custody only, but all should buy now.

Being an ephemerist, another name for a bottom feeder who collects small scraps of paper, we are delighted to report that the California Historical Society received from the Mellon Foundation a two-year grant of exactly \$247,738 and no/100th dollars. It is one of fifteen organizations in the nation to receive funding to catalogue hidden special collections and archives, and in this case, the historical society is the lead partner in the California Ephemera Project. The three other partners are the San Francisco Public Library (praised in the *Chronicle* February 2), the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Historical Society, and the Society of California Pioneers. Good for them!

While on that last venerable institution, Mary Kay Duggan has finished adding the holdings at the Pioneers to her California Sheet Music Project website. This marvelous electronic location holds 2,700 pieces published in California between 1852 and 1900. Many are in glowing color.

We are also delighted when the California Historical Society becomes insidiously devious. In December 2007, it sponsored a historic libations night, featuring Pisco Punches and Boothby Cocktails,

using the cover of Bill Boothby's 1891 recipe book on the postcard announcement.

That is, the Honorable William T. Boothby, Assemblyman from San Francisco, to you. To mixologists, he is the legendary Cocktail Boothby. The book cover, showing Boothby as a splendiferous rooster wearing a white jacket with gold braid, intrigued Fritz Maytag, a noted collector of ancient beer-brewing bibles. Oh, yes, Maytag is also known for blue cheese, Anchor Steam Beer, Junípero Gin and Old Potrero Whiskeys.

As Cocktail Bill declared himself to be the "Standard Authority," what could Maytag do but reprint Boothby's first book? Within six weeks of starting, this \$14.95 *American Bar Tender* (1891) appeared at the historical society's Historic Libations Annual Holiday Event on December 11. Additionally, *Fine Books* for September shows that collecting cocktail books is fashionable, so buy a copy. All proceeds from sales go to the California Historical Society. If you have difficulties socializing, mix with the best.

This September issue of *Fine Books* also revealed to us that on August 1, 2008, Amazon.com bought AbeBooks. Do not mess with a feisty woman! One such even loaned her name to this state. Although still independent, speculation declares there will be a gobblation, making AbeBooks the rare book section of Amazon's used book selling.

From within these same *Fine Book* columns, we draw attention to a thought-provoking article on replevin. This is an action where a government seizes records from private collectors that had once been in its custody. The California Legislature quietly passed a bill authorizing replevin last session, but the governor vetoed it, as it was not budget-related. Replevin will come again before the legislature this spring.

No one protests returning stolen items. Disputes come when the Federal, State, or County government discarded documents, perhaps more than a century ago, that it felt they were either worthless or it did not wish to pay to store them. Then, years later, after collectors have rescued them from trash and given them value, the government entity demands their return, free.

AlLowman, a BCC member from the Lone Star Republic, dispatched a copy of his certificate of insanity. *Fruits of a Gentle Madness* describes *The Al Lowman Printing Arts Collection and Research Archive* at Texas

A & M, College Station. As befits an amplification of a printing arts collection this artistically printed catalogue abounds with color plates.

An “innate curiosity,” an “appreciation of printing and bookmaking as a performing art,” and use as “a vehicle for bringing together a wide-ranging circle of friends” brought this collection into being, modestly claims its gentle and erudite compiler. Section 1, “Texas Printing,” occupies 110 pages, fixing the latitude and longitude of Lowman’s heart deep in the Great State of Texas. He formed the largest private collection, including ephemera and correspondence, on Carl Hertzog.

Lowman is no mere shelf-gazer. His Hertzog bibliography *Printer at the Pass* (1972) and *Printing Arts in Texas* (1975) are still standard. A slim Section 2 follows. Its 28 pages cover “Printing Outside Texas.” Appropriate for this clime, two-thirds of the fine books came from the Bear Flag Republic. *Valenti Angelo* (1976) and *Exploring Japanese Books and Scrolls* (1999) represent the Book Club.

Michael Russem of the Kat Ran Press in Cambridge, MA, draws our attention to his growing collection of more than six hundred postage stamps designed by 19 typographers. We were amazed to learn that governments had actually been so open to using artistic printing designers, but Russem’s collection contains stamps designed by typographers Peter Bi’lak, Neville Brody, Walter Brudi, Wim Crouwel, S.H. de Roos, Adrian Frutiger, Eric Gill, S.L. Hartz, Lancy Hidy, Max Kisman, Jan Van Krimpen, Jean-Benoit Lévy, Gerrit Noordzij, Erik Spierkermann, Reynolds Stone, Georg Trump, Gerard Unger, Julian Waters, and Hermann Zapf.

Kat Ran Press issued an affiliated publication at the end of 2007. For \$45 (paperback) or \$155 (deluxe) gets you graphic artist Lance Hidy’s *Designing the Mentoring Stamp*, which arrives with a descriptive subtitle: *An Artist’s commentary on Theory, Gesture, Photography, Composition, Color, Light, and the Typeface Penumbra*.

Ahem, Readers. Do not forget that we like articles. Send them to Lucy, or direct to one of your favorites on the committee: J.O. Bugental, Lucy Cohen, Victoria Dailey, or ourselves. One member does the initial editing, but each member reads the full issue.

While we now deplore the effects of incandescent light on books, the situation has been much worse. In 1892, Secretary of State E.G. Waite looked deploringly over the State Library with its “87,000 volumes,

many of them with costly and exquisite bindings." Everything was black. Gas lights, which burned seven cubic feet an hour, were not book and binding friendly. The library walls and indigo-painted skylight were also "cracked and covered with soot."

Waite did not wait to take action. Soon, "more than a hundred jets of electric fire" illuminated bright, pastel walls, dome, and ceiling. The Secretary of State announced that he wished to make "the State Library the attractive feature of the Capitol." E.G. Waite had correct priorities.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BOOKISH NEWS

BY BRUCE WHITEMAN

"Tango with Cows" is the unlikely title of a new exhibition at the Getty Research Institute that opened in mid-November and will be there until April 19, 2009. The GRI has long collected pre-Soviet Russian avant-garde books, and this show focuses on that material for the period from 1910 until the Revolution. Nancy Perloff and Allison Pultz have drawn together a number of wonderfully interesting books and illustrative material that focus on Russian Futurism, and in large part the material is friable and the very opposite of the book as luxury object. These books were produced mainly by hand in small numbers on poor-quality paper, and it is a miracle that many of them survive at all.

Unprepossessing in the cases, the Getty has done a terrific job of making the books accessible: through recordings of the texts that can heard in the gallery on audiophones, through digital surrogates that one can page through on computer terminals, and even through actual facsimiles of several books prepared for the exhibition that can be picked up and examined. The texts are for the most part whacky and fantastic, and there is much play with syntax, word construction, and metaphor, including poems in *zuum*, an invented language. Some very famous artists, such as Natalia Goncharova and Kazimir Malevich, worked with poets like Mayakovsky and Khlebnikov to produce books meant to explode all bourgeois notions of what constitutes a book. Who can argue with Alexei Kruchenykh's mandate that, "Books should be small, but contain no lies."

Across the plaza in the Getty Museum at the same time was an exhibition based on material of a completely opposite kind. "The *Belles Heures* of the Duke of Berry" was a much heralded show made possible by the disbinding of this famous luxury manuscript, owned since 1954 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The Duke commissioned this elaborately decorated Book of Hours from the Limbourg brothers in 1405, and it contains a total of 172 astonishingly beautiful miniatures.

As usual with this sort of material, the lighting was too low, and the detail in the miniatures was often hard to see, despite the magnifying glasses helpfully provided by the Museum. All the same, the painting is exquisite in every way, from the modeling to the colors to the emotional effects of the scenes portrayed, as conventional as the latter mostly are (prayers to saints, the Stations of the Cross, etc.). This was not material likely to amuse one, but it was rather funny to see one anachronistic scene, which portrayed several men holding books and mourning the death of St. Anthony in 356 in which the books bear clearly rather elaborate Renaissance bindings instead of the very simple bindings that would have covered codices a millennium earlier. The *Belles Heures* exhibition closed on February 8 but will move to the Met in the fall of this year.

Since Ann Philbin took over UCLA's Hammer Museum a decade ago, the Hammer has become most closely identified with cutting-edge exhibitions that focus on contemporary art and living artists. All the same, from time to time the Museum mounts a show more devoted to historical art, and its recent exhibition "Gouge: The Modern Woodcut 1870 to Now," which closed on February 8, is one of these, despite the "Now." Allegra Pesenti, who is a curator in the Grunwald Center there, brought together a wonderful selection of woodcut art from the period that begins with the Franco-Prussian War and ends with artists like Anselm Kiefer and events like the Oaxaca uprising of 2006, which produced many anonymous woodcut protest prints.

The woodcut is one of the oldest forms of printmaking and the rough texture of its results, compared to wood engraving, appealed to the post-Impressionist generation, Gauguin in particular. The Expressionists (including Schiele, Nolde, Kirchner and Munch, all well represented in "Gouge") were also attracted to the woodcut's

aesthetic possibilities. Two books in the exhibition complemented the single-leaf prints: Kandinsky's lovely *Klänge* (1913) and an issue of *L'Ymagier* from 1895 with a crude but interesting woodcut by the poet and dramatist Alfred Jarry.

Pesenti was also able to include two actual blocks to accompany their prints: one by Eric Gill and one by Matisse, both owned locally. Perhaps the most astonishing woodcut in the show was a small piece of what is surely the world's largest example. Thomas Kilpper, a German artist born in 1956, made a woodcut that was 4,000 square feet (directly on the floor of an abandoned London building), and the resulting print was hung on the side of a building before it was cut up into smaller (and presumably more saleable) bits.

On January 12, La Sierra University, a Seventh Day Adventist institution with a sprawling campus in Riverside, opened a show in its Brandstater Gallery entitled "Book as Sculpture," put together by the independent curator Jean Clad. Clad has brought together the work of fourteen artists, most of them from California, but including Paul Johnson from the U.K., Susan Porteous from Colorado, and Beth Thielen from the east coast. Most of these artists have little interest in text, and prefer to work with the book as an abstract form. Genie Shenk, for example, who also has a solo show opening at the Athenaeum in La Jolla on January 16, showed two pieces, one of which is a long wall installation of two quite beautiful paper objects called "The Book of Interior Folds."

Susan Porteous's three pieces were all essentially wordless bindings that were transformed into objects, one of them ("How to Play Bridge") formed like a footbridge between two pieces of stone. Sue Ann Robinson showed pieces which she had created together with her mother, Peg—works which all focus on memory and how it is evoked by sense experience. Linda Ekstrom bravely cut up into bits the entire works of Shakespeare and put the strips of paper in a silk bag, and Terry Braunstein also altered books for pieces which depend on what she calls "visual archaeology."

Laura Stickney and Vilma Mendillo co-created two interesting pieces that evoke early aviation, and they were almost the only book works that had texts—in their case, poems relating to Lincoln Beachy and Alberto Santos-Dumont, two early flyers. Sam Erenberg, almost

alone, eschewed the dangers of bookish frillery in his piece "From Nudity to Raiment," which cleverly enclosed a book of that title in an actual jacket. "Book as Sculpture" closed on February 9.

This year promises to bring further exhibitions that focus on artists' books and the book as an object to Southern California. In a future column, I will report on exhibitions slated for the Long Beach Museum of Art and the Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles, where the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) will be showing its vast collection of the book arts this winter.

On November 3, Fullerton bookseller James Lorson died after surgery. Jim was born in 1928, and had operated Lorson's Books and Prints for many years. He had a devoted clientele for his stock of miniature and illustrated books, modern firsts, prints, private press books and others at the back of a store. In the front, his wife, Joan sold new children's books. The store remains open, with its ultimate fate undecided.

Second Story Books of Claremont, the bookshop which used to be Chic Goldsmit's Claremont Books and Prints until it was sold to Kyle Hernandez recently, is closing up shop already. The business will continue virtually, but the combined forces of the Internet and the economy were apparently insurmountable for the new owner. It is an increasingly common *dénouement* for antiquarian bookshops, alas.

GIFTS TO THE LIBRARY

The Book Club has received from Peter Koch and the Codex Foundation *Book Art Object*. This truly splendid work is a remarkable cross section of books shown or discussed at the first Codex Foundation book fair in February 2007. It contains the addresses of the four speakers with an additional five essays on art, design, and the book. This most innovative Codex event reprised in a second edition in February 2009. Keep them coming, Peter!

Worldwide book arts, revealed in 735 colored illustrations among 432 pages of text, are exciting in their diversity of book types, structures, and content. Contact information for every exhibitor is present. Offered at \$75, this pioneering work is highly recommended to all book lovers and lovers of the book arts in the contemporary setting.

Our own J.O. Bugental did the copy-editing. Thank you, Peter Koch and the Codex Foundation for this gift.

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of Barbara Land, The Club has a copy of the magnificent *Adventures of a Marbler* by Robin Heyeck. Robin enthralled Club members through a demonstration of marbling on January 12 and a display of her marbling and letter press printing is in the Club rooms. We are most fortunate to have this limited edition by such a noted modern marbler. Thank you, Barbara.

The Club has received a gift from John Windle of the *Pythian Odes* by the Fifth Century BC Greek lyric poet Pindar published by the Nonsuch Press in 1928. Editor Francis Meynell inscribed this copy #1046 to our very own Oscar Lewis in San Francisco on November 2, 1949. As typical of Nonsuch Press books, it is bound in buckram and exhibits excellent commercial typography, augmented with three copperplate engravings by Stephen Gooden (1892-1955).

The press proprietor was a typical British sort. Sir Francis Meredith Wilfrid Meynell, KB (1891-1975), a poet and printer, was the son of a noted suffragist. In 1913 he became manager of the London *Daily Herald*, but World War I cut short this career after he went to prison for being a conscientious objector. In 1922, with his wife Alix Kilroy (1903-1999), Meynell began the Nonsuch Press. Its name came from Henry VIII's great ornate Renaissance palace, of which there was "nonsuch" in the world.

The press, which flourished during the 1920s and 1930s, printed scarce books in large editions – Pindar was 1550 copies. During World War II, Meynell and Kilroy produced *Utility Design*, an austere functional style of furniture. This book is a fine example of the Nonsuch Press at its best. Our gratitude goes to John Windle.



★ A REMINDER ON STANDING ORDERS

As was announced in our last issue, members who place Standing Orders will receive an automatic 15% discount on all new books published by the club. Because Standing Orders are so important to the club's mission, we are pleased to offer this attractive benefit to those who support the club so generously.

Standing Order Members contract to purchase every club book upon publication. Standing Order members may not pick and choose from among the books. Should a Standing Order member decide he/she does not want a particular book, Standing Order status will cease and that member will no longer be entitled to the 15% discount. The member will, however, be eligible for the 10% pre-publication discount, as are regular members.

We thank our Standing Order members for their dedicated commitment. We encourage all members to upgrade to this level in order to enjoy the club's superb books at an even more attractive rate while increasing their support of the club.

Victoria Dailey

Chair, Publications Committee

QUARTERLY NEWS-LETTER

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Let's Play

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA ANNOUNCES
THE PUBLICATION OF AN HISTORIC CHILDREN'S BOOK

LET'S PLAY by THE GEARHART SISTERS

In 1929, Pasadena artists and sisters Frances, May and Edna Gearhart created a children's book illustrated with their original linoleum cuts and verses. It was, however, not published, and the sisters' original set ultimately entered the Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University. Eighty years later, it is with great pleasure that The Book Club of California announces that it is publishing the first edition of this charming work based on the Princeton portfolio.

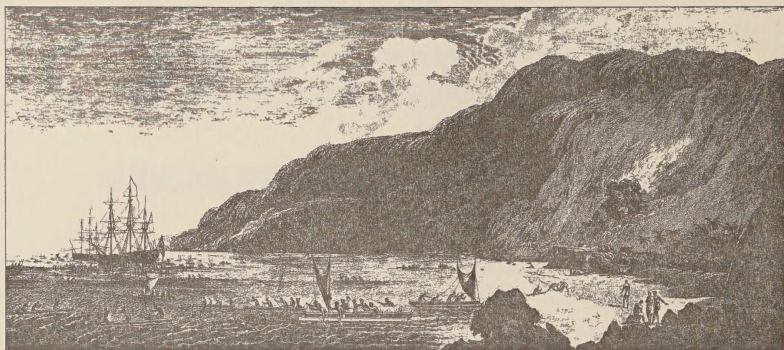
Frances Gearhart (1869–1958) became the leading color woodcut artist in California during her lifetime, May Gearhart (1872–1951), a leading practitioner of the color etching, was the Supervisor of Art in the Los Angeles City School system, while Edna Gearhart (1879–1974), who was skilled at drawing, taught art at Los Angeles High School.

Let's Play contains 25 color plates (including one fold-out plate); an extra, loose print is laid in, and there are 11 verses. The Afterword is by Victoria Dailey and A Note on the Gearhart Printing Technique is by Susan Futterman. The edition size is 1000. The price is \$75, plus tax where applicable & shipping.

To order: write, telephone or email The Book Club of California, 312 Sutter St., 5th Floor, San Francisco, ca 94108. Tel. 800-869-7656 or 415-781-7532; info@bccbooks.org



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